Climate Smart and Green Jobs Community Pledge

WHEREAS, the City of Kingston understands that climate change poses a real and increasing threat to our local and global environments and is primarily exacerbated by the current burning of fossil fuels; and

WHEREAS, we believe the scale of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions required for climate stabilization will require sustained and substantial efforts and that even if emissions were dramatically reduced today, communities would still be required to adapt to the effects of climate change for decades to come; and

WHEREAS, we believe that our timely response to climate change provides us with an unprecedented opportunity to save money, and to build livable, energy-independent and secure communities, vibrant innovation economies, healthy and safe schools, and resilient infrastructures; and

WHEREAS, there exists opportunities to take a comprehensive approach to implement policies and programs at the local government level to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase energy efficiencies, promote local job growth, increase economic activity and resiliency, improve quality of life, and promote social justice; and

WHEREAS, we believe that Kingston is in a position to set an example, for all of New York State, on how a small city can make a big difference, Kingston has a long-standing interest in attracting and retaining innovative businesses; and

WHEREAS, the effects of climate change will significantly impact our infrastructure, economy and livelihoods, disrupt our ecological communities, spread invasive species and exotic diseases, negatively impact our drinking water supplies and storm water and sewer treatment infrastructure, and pose health threats to our citizens; and

WHEREAS, the "green economy" of clean and efficient energy systems, high performance buildings, clean and efficient transportation, healthy materials and products, is an arena of emerging interest in New York State with job growth and training opportunities already emerging through the area's solar, wind, geothermal and energy services companies, as well as other dynamic sectors; and

WHEREAS, we believe a local commitment to climate change will contribute substantially to other community objectives and competitively position the City of Kingston for funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, offering Energy-Efficiency Block Grants, and other applicable future federal grant opportunities, such as the pending American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, reducing energy cost and improving operational efficiency of aging infrastructure will lower Kingston's government operating cost and save taxpayer dollars, in addition to lowering infrastructure and service costs, community-wide climate protection will also help to maintain property values by making communities desirable and attractive to new residents,

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the City of Kingston, in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate will

1. **Pledge to combat climate change by becoming a Climate Smart Community**

   Set goals, both short term and long term, to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to predicted climatic changes. Designate the City of Kingston Conservation Advisory Council to establish a Climate Smart and Green Jobs Taskforce to review the issues and propose a plan of action. Designate, as a point person, a City of Kingston employee, with an environmental background, who will oversee climate change and

green jobs initiatives, publically report on progress in conjunction with a Climate Smart and Green Jobs Taskforce and the Conservation Advisory Council, and work cooperatively with similar task forces and organizations within Kingston and in neighboring communities to ensure that efforts complement and reinforce one another.

2. Set Goals, Inventory Emissions, Move to Action

Gather data, inventory GHG emissions, and establish baselines for local government operations and community sectors. Develop quantifiable interim GHG emission targets consistent with emission reduction goals and annually propose a schedule and financing strategy to meet them. Encourage stakeholder and public input and develop an action plan.

3. Decrease Energy Demand for Local Government Operations

Work with schools, hospitals, and city agencies, who will educate the public, in order to adopt and meet a goal of reducing electricity use by 15 percent from projected levels by or before 2015.

A. Existing Public Facilities. Inventory current building electricity usage and identify opportunities for conservation and efficiency retrofits. Obtain energy assessments from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), the New York Power Authority, Central Hudson Gas and Electric Corporation or other professionals. Purchase energy efficient equipment and appliances, so as to meet current New York State ENERGY STAR standards; improve lighting, heating, and cooling efficiency; set thermostats for maximum energy conservation; decrease plug load from office equipment; and increase pump efficiency in water and wastewater systems.
B. New Public Buildings. Achieve, at least, a LEED Silver rating (U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), or the equivalent, for all new local buildings.
C. Infrastructure. Incorporate energy efficient technologies and operations and maintenance practices into municipal street lighting, traffic signals, and water and wastewater treatment facilities.
D. Vehicle Fleet and Commuting. Improve the average fuel efficiency of local government fleet vehicles. Discourage vehicle idling and encourage bicycling, car-pooling, and public transit for employees. Add bike-racks to all city buses and paint bike lanes. Consider reducing the number of vehicles; converting fleet vehicles to sustainable alternative fuels; and using electric vehicles where possible. Establish a tele-commuting policy for city employees, where appropriate.

4. Encourage Renewable Energy for Local Government Operations

Supply as much of the local government's power, heat, and hot water needs as possible from solar, wind, and small hydro through purchase or direct generation.

5. Realize Benefits of Recycling and Other Climate Smart Solid Waste Management Practices

Expand the "reduce, reuse, recycle" approach to waste management in local government operations and in the whole community. Reduce the amount of solid waste generated—promote backyard composting, implement volume-based pricing and educate residents on how to prevent waste. Promote reuse and provide a space for drop-off or trade of reusable goods. Provide recycling receptacles in local government buildings and outdoor spaces, require duplex printing in government offices, compost food scraps and green waste, and adopt a comprehensive green purchasing program.

6. Promote Climate Protection Through Community Land Use Planning

Combat climate change by encouraging low-emissions development that is resilient to climatic changes. When updating land use policies, building codes or community plans, include provisions to combat climate change; reduce sprawl, preserve and protect open space, biodiversity, and water supplies; promote compact, transit-oriented, bikeable and walkable communities; promote infill development, minimize new development in floodplains; maintain or establish healthy community forests; and promote best forest management practices and encourage tree planting, especially along waterways and streets, to increase shading and to absorb carbon dioxide. Use the authority of the City's planning board to assure that new development projects reflect the community's desires for viable ecosystems and low carbon footprints.

7. Plan for Adaptation to Unavoidable Climate Change

Evaluate risks from unavoidable climate change, set adaptation goals and plan for adaptation. Identify climate change impacts (such as flooding, drought, and extreme temperatures) that could affect the community. Identify areas such as water supply and sewer infrastructures that may be at risk due to increased intensity of rainfall, turbidity and sedimentation, increased flash floods and increased droughts in late summer, sea-level rise, and other future changes in climate. Factor risks into long-term investments and decision-making. Execute climate change adaptation and preparedness measures through local government planning, development, and operation, giving priority to the highest risk areas.

8. Green Innovation Strategy

<u>The Climate Smart and Green Jobs Taskforce</u>. Engage the Conservation Advisory Council and local relevant industry associations, non-governmental associations, county, state, and local agencies community members and employers, churches, and unions to review the options and produce a concrete, actionable green innovation strategy (including budget, funding sources, and predicted return on investment) for implementation by appropriate city departments, with the support of partner agencies, with a goal of completion of 6 months. Identify key leaders in the community and consult, develop, reinvigorate, or realign partnerships with potential leaders and organizations such as: community organizations, unions, businesses, workforce development programs, schools, and advocates.

<u>Identify Goals and Assess Opportunities</u>. Ensure that overarching economic and environmental goals are integrated with job development. Identify opportunities to incorporate climate protection, sustainability and environmental goods and service industries into economic development plans. Consider how energy conservation programs or renewable energy development will provide opportunities for local job creation.

<u>Create a Local Action Plan</u>. Create demand for green-collar jobs with policies, investment, and incentives that expand the market for green products and services. Prepare a green-collar workforce by building on existing training programs that provide job seekers with "pathways out of poverty" and family-supporting, career-track jobs. Encourage workforce development training and school curricula that support the emerging green-collar sector, including renewable energy and energy efficiency, as well as climate smart solid waste management practices. Procure climate smart goods and services for local government operations and support modernizing of local and national electricity grids.

Evaluate, Leverage, and Grow. Track progress, quantify achievements, and build on partnerships and successes to enhance public support and develop new resources. The Climate Smart and Green Jobs Taskforce shall report to the Common Council and the general public, at least once a year on jobs created and retained, lessons learned, and progress made through the strategy toward creating a greener and more livable city.

9. Inform and Inspire the Public

Lead by example. Highlight local government commitment to reducing energy use, saving tax dollars, and adapting to changing conditions. Demonstrate the benefits of energy savings, energy efficiency, and renewable energy projects by communicating community climate goals and progress to constituents through various means.

10. Commit to an Evolving Process

Acknowledge that research and policy on climate protection are constantly improving and evolving. Be willing to consider new ideas and commit to update plans and policies as needed. Compare successes, cooperate and collaborate with neighboring communities to redirect less effective actions and amplify positive results.